

# DNR NEWS

## Energy and Waste Management Bureau

For Immediate Release  
April 18, 2003

Contact: Jennifer Moehlmann 515-281-8518

### **GASOLINE PRICES DROP, REFLECTING LOWER CRUDE OIL PRICES**

**DES MOINES** —Gasoline prices have dropped significantly since the beginning of the action in Iraq, due to lower oil prices and few gasoline-related refinery problems. Prices will probably remain above year-ago levels, however, because inventories are still below last year's levels. Although Venezuela is has returned to producing crude oil and gasoline, production rates remain below last year's levels.

Gasoline prices decreased 19 cents from March to an average of \$1.46 for a gallon of self-serve, regular unleaded gasoline, according to the DNR's April 15 Gas Monitors survey. Prices across the state ranged from \$1.38 to \$1.57 per gallon and are \$0.10 higher than this time last year. The average price for regular unleaded with ethanol was \$1.43 per gallon. The latest data shows ethanol-blended gasoline represents 63.6 percent of the market share, a record-high level.

Retail conventional unleaded gasoline prices in Iowa are \$0.06 lower than the national average of \$1.52 per gallon and \$0.01 lower than the regional average of \$1.47 per gallon.

"Gasoline prices are expected to drop to the high \$1.30 range, if the lower crude oil prices hold and there are no problems with supply," said Jennifer Moehlmann, energy data analyst for the DNR. "Prices will still likely rise again this summer, and could even spike, if demand rises dramatically or there are any problems with supply."

Crude oil finished trading on Apr. 16 at \$29.18 per barrel, up \$0.57 from last month. One year ago, crude was \$25.93 per barrel. National crude oil inventory is at 277.2 million barrels, down 13.2 percent from the previous year. The price of crude has traded in the \$27 -\$31 range over the past month, fluctuating on positive or negative news on the action in Iraq, warnings by OPEC of oil oversupply, and reports of civil unrest in Nigeria. The DNR expects crude oil prices to remain volatile while the U.S. is engaged in Iraq, with prices ranging between \$26 to \$30 per barrel.

The average price of self-serve diesel fuel for April was \$1.51, down \$0.23 from last month. Diesel fuel was \$1.35 per gallon one year ago. Diesel fuel prices dropped along with the prices of crude oil, but inventory levels remain a concern.

### **Propane**

The April 14 survey found the average price of propane was \$0.94 per gallon. This is \$0.15 lower than the previous month and 14.6 percent above the retail price of propane at this time last year. The price decrease was caused by lower crude oil prices and decreased demand as spring-like weather spread across the U.S.

### **Heating Oil Prices**

The April 15 survey found the average price of No.2 heating oil was \$1.13 per gallon, \$0.18 lower than the previous month and 20.2 percent above the price of heating oil at this time last year. A year ago, the average price was \$0.94 per gallon. The price decrease was caused by lower crude oil prices and decreased demand from warmer weather across the U.S.

### **MOTOR FUELS SURVEY**

<b>Self-Serve</b>	<b>March 18</b>	<b>April 17</b>	<b>Change</b>
Regular Unleaded	1.65	1.46	-0.19
Regular Unleaded with Ethanol	1.64	1.43	-0.21
Premium Unleaded	1.76	1.58	-0.18
Diesel	1.74	1.51	-0.23
<b>Full-Serve</b>	<b>March 18</b>	<b>April 17</b>	<b>Change</b>
Regular Unleaded	1.77	1.58	-0.19
Regular Unleaded with Ethanol	1.79	1.61	-0.18
Premium Unleaded	1.90	1.67	-0.23
Diesel	1.79	1.66	-0.13

### **HEATING FUELS SURVEY**

	<b>March 17</b>	<b>April 14</b>	<b>Change</b>
Propane	1.09	0.94	-0.15
#2 Heating Oil	1.31	1.13	-0.18

### **AVERAGE SELF-SERVE UNLEADED PRICES IN MAJOR CITIES**

	<b>March 18</b>	<b>April 17</b>	<b>Change</b>
Ames	1.63	1.46	-0.17
Cedar Rapids	1.60	1.41	-0.19
Council Bluffs	1.61	1.42	-0.19
Davenport	1.62	1.44	-0.18
Des Moines	1.66	1.50	-0.16
Dubuque	1.68	1.45	-0.23
Fort Dodge	1.67	1.52	-0.15
Iowa City	1.70	1.50	-0.20
Sioux City	1.63	1.41	-0.21
Waterloo	1.67	1.45	-0.22
Average Metro Price	1.63	1.45	-0.18

AVERAGE SELF-SERVE UNLEADED PRICES IN RURAL IOWA

	<b>March 18</b>	<b>April 17</b>	<b>Change</b>
Northeast	1.67	1.48	-0.19
Northwest	1.66	1.49	-0.17
Southeast	1.65	1.43	-0.22
Southwest	1.65	1.47	-0.18
Rural Area Average	1.66	1.47	-0.19

WHOLESALE PRICES IN METROPOLITAN AREAS AROUND IOWA

<b>Unleaded (cents per gallon)</b>	<b>March 6</b>	<b>April 11</b>
Des Moines	114.61	93.89
Dubuque	115.25	93.93
<b>Diesel Fuel (cents per gallon)</b>	<b>March 6</b>	<b>April 11</b>
Des Moines	116.94	87.77
Dubuque	117.88	88.58

-30-

[END]